



## **HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

**July 30, 2014 at 4:30 pm  
Council Chambers**

### **COMMISSIONERS PRESENT**

Trena Carter, Treasurer  
Ian Kohen, Vice Chairperson  
Annette Barnes  
Kelly Benjamin  
Greg Lewis  
Tony McClendon  
John Stroh

### **COMMISSIONERS ABSENT**

Gil Palmer, Chairperson  
Rhea Baker-Ipek  
Richard Gold

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Aida Ramirez, Director  
Betsy Schuette, Secretary

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### **MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

#### **GUESTS PRESENT**

Jon Rohde, Chief of Police

#### **ELECTION**

Commissioner Kohen requested to amend the agenda to add the election of Secretary to the Executive Committee. The Commissioners tabled this election at the last Commission meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup>. Commissioner Benjamin was nominated as Secretary on the Executive Committee with no objection and no competing nominations. **Commissioner Carter moved to close the nominations. Commissioner McClendon seconded. Motion carried.**

Commissioners cast their vote, ballots were collected and calculated. **Commissioner Benjamin was selected as Secretary of the Executive Committee by unanimous vote.**

#### **SECRETARY'S REPORT**

**Commissioner Stroh moved that the June minutes be approved. Commissioner Lewis seconded. Motion carried. June minutes were approved.**

#### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Commissioner Carter reported the balance of the Donations Account as \$7019.24 with no activity since the last reporting period. The outstanding balance of ticket revenue is \$330.00 which would bring the final balance to \$7,349.24. The MACDA Video Grant had a beginning balance of \$25,000.00 with a payment being made to Canteloup LLC in the amount of \$5,000.00.

#### **CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT**

No Report.

#### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

Director Ramirez introduced Police Chief Jon Rohde to the Commission. Chief Rohde was recently promoted following the retirement of former Chief Jason Maddix. Commissioners introduced themselves to Chief Rohde. Chief Rohde extended his desire to work closely with the Human Rights Commission. Chief Rohde also discussed diversity circles, Citizens Safety Academy, Columbus Police and Fire Youth Academy. Discussion ensued.

#### **CASEWORK:**

Director Ramirez reported a very busy month in the office. Director Ramirez reported that she structured the information about case work provided on the Director's Report to give more detailed information about the total calls and activity that occurs in the office.

The following case activity occurred:

##### **Phone intake:**

- Disability in employment (alleged wrongful termination due to cognitive impairments), provided resources
- National origin in employment (alleged wrongful termination), in person intake, no-show
- Age discrimination in employment (alleged wrongful termination), provided resources, determined not actionable

##### **Scheduled in-person intake:**

- Race discrimination in employment (alleged disparate treatment and wrongful termination), several intakes, **filed with EEOC**
- Sex harassment and retaliation in employment, ongoing
- National origin in housing (alleging wrongful eviction), ongoing
- National origin in employment (alleged disparate treatment and wrongful termination), **filed with EEOC**
- 2- Disability accommodation (alleging non-compliance of ADA by local area restaurants), ongoing possible technical assist

#### **Walk-in:**

- Pregnancy in employment (alleged wrongful termination), provided resources, no follow up
- National origin in employment (alleged wrongful termination), in person intake, no-show
- Race discrimination in employment (alleged disparate treatment, retaliation, and wrongful termination), several intakes, **filed with EEOC**

#### **Technical assists:**

- National origin housing / possible hate crime (alleging neighbor threat over perceived national origin/immigration status) –CPD intervened, worked with Chief Rohde. Discussed issues of translation for citizens who do not speak English. Discussion ensued.
- HIV discrimination in housing, landlord/tenant/employment issues, ongoing research to determine best course of action

#### **Other:**

- Housing, improper landlord access to apartment
- Medical facilities, alleging discrimination in treatment
- Indiana State Police, alleging insufficient reasonable suspicion to stop vehicle and lack of probable cause to search vehicle
- Housing authority referral
- Autism resources referral to Medicaid
- Assistance with wording for employment ad
- Homeless, housing referral
- Rental assistance, referral to 2-1-1
- Housing, health department referral
- Housing, disabled felon, referral to housing authority
- Employment social security issue, referred to personnel, Brown County
- Disability in housing, transportation, ongoing

#### **COMMISSION:**

- Former Director took time off using her comp time through the month of June up to July 10<sup>th</sup>. Director Ramirez's promotion was effective July 11<sup>th</sup>.
- After an extensive search and interview process we hired a Deputy Director, Molly Connor. She is a recent graduate of Hanover College. Deputy Director Connor completed her pre-employment screening and will start August 15<sup>th</sup>.
- Director Ramirez has been working with Carissa Fye, a graduate student at Columbia University studying Human Rights. Ms. Fye is helping Director Ramirez to research topic ideas for the Art & Essay Contest.

#### **OFFICE:**

- Director Ramirez met with Mayor Brown and Shane Burton, Chair of MACDA on July 10<sup>th</sup>. The meeting was for consideration of amending the bylaws to add additional members and also fill the need for active membership in the sub-committees. A couple of members have dropped off MACDA due to illness and were not able to fulfill their duties.
- Director Ramirez and Commissioner Barnes attended the quarterly session of Audit & Review Committee on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Director Ramirez is researching the ordinance from Board of Works as well as the Rules and Regulations and any Amendments since its beginning.
- Director Ramirez attended the MACDA Community Awareness and Business Awareness sub-committee meetings to strategize the planning of the video that is being produced with the Cummins Foundation grant. The Committees have been working with Cantaloupe LLC who is producing the video. The Committee as well as Cantaloupe's goal is that they will be able to roll out the video by October for different group members of the community for Disability Awareness month.

- Director Ramirez attended the Stonebelt Freedom Celebration with Mayor Brown on July 29<sup>th</sup>. The Freedom Celebration featured various presentations and performances by members of the Stonebelt Day Program; coordinated by Tracy Ault, Direct Support Specialist. Stonebelt discussed with Mayor Brown about the possibility of acquiring some artwork to display at City Hall.
- Director Ramirez met with Ric King to discuss the history of Audit & Review Committee and also the nomination of a new Committee member. The information will be sent to the Mayor who will select a new member to appoint. There are a few questions regarding the rules and regulation that the Committee is researching.

#### **OTHER ACTIVITIES-NETWORKING WITH THE COMMUNITY/EDUCATING THE COMMUNITY:**

- MACDA:
  - The Sidewalk sub-committee has met to discuss the direction of the committee and to develop an "Adopt-A-Sidewalk" proposal.
  - The Business Awareness sub-committee met to work on the video.
  - The Community Awareness sub-committee met to discuss the direction of the committee and the need for more active committee members.
  - The full MACDA committee convened on July 7<sup>th</sup>.
  - Mayor Brown requested Director Ramirez attend a meeting with Mary Stroh, Chad Phillips and Sondra Bolte for a collaboration leadership project. The project is being headed by Jack Hess who is working with a larger group. This group is tasked with answering the question; "To work together to increase the number of diverse individuals in meaningful positions of leadership." Meetings will take place on a monthly basis. Director Ramirez has volunteered to help.

#### **CITY HALL:**

- Caleb Tennis was appointed to serve on the Board of Works by Mayor Brown.
- Mark Jones was named Parks Director by the Parks Board.
- Sgt. Harris was promoted to public information officer and Cultural Liaison and will assume the position upon the retirement of Lt. Matt Myers on Monday, August 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Allie Keen was promoted to Senior Planner following the relocation of Thom Weintraut.

#### **UPCOMING:**

August 1<sup>st</sup>: Columbus Police Public Safety Citizens Academy applications are due August 1<sup>st</sup>.

August 1<sup>st</sup>: MACDA Community Awareness sub-committee meeting.

August 7<sup>th</sup>: Director Ramirez will be meeting with Dr. Wafa, IUPUC Vice Chancellor/Dean to discuss potential diversity collaborations.

August 9<sup>th</sup>: Director Ramirez will be speaking at the Bartholomew County Landlord's Association meeting. This will be an introductory meeting and discussion about current general issues occurring in the Columbus housing market.

August 13<sup>th</sup>: CAMEO regularly scheduled meeting.

#### **LIAISON REPORTS**

- Commissioner Lewis reported no July CAMEO meeting.
- Commissioner Stroh- no report.
- Commissioner Barnes- no report.

#### **DISCUSSION**

Commissioners who know of any candidates for the Commission can refer them to apply.

There is an opening for Commissioner Liaison to the Transit Department to be discussed at the next meeting.

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

**Commissioner Stroh moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Barnes. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned.**